

U.S. Department of Justice

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***** PRESS CONFERENCE ADVISORY FOR THURSDAY,
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**U.S. ATTORNEY PATRICK MEEHAN AND PHILADELPHIA SCHOOL
DISTRICT CEO PAUL VALLAS TO DEBUT GUN CRIME VIDEO
SCHEDULED FOR USE IN CITY SCHOOLS**

**Documentary Warns Youth About The Consequences Of Gun Crime
And Violence – Features Personal Stories Of Victims**

PHILADELPHIA – You'll hear from three young men, about the same age, all serving life sentences – one behind bars and two in a wheelchair. Their three distinct stories are linked as living examples of the consequences of gun crime.

"This video shows in an instant how one bullet can forever alter the course of someone's life," said Meehan, whose office produced the documentary as part of *Project Sentry*, a federal initiative which focuses on the prosecution and deterrence of juvenile gun crime, including school related gun violence, and the prosecution of adults who illegally furnish firearms to juveniles.

Thursday, February 5, at 11:00 a.m., U.S. Attorney Meehan and Philadelphia School District CEO Paul Vallas will debut the video at the **Horace Furness School, 1900 South Third Street, Philadelphia, Pa., 19148. Broadcast BETA copies of the video will be available.** Meehan and Vallas will also officially announce plans for a mentoring program between the U.S. Attorney's Office and a high school class in the Furness School's Academy of Law and Criminal Justice.

"The School District of Philadelphia is excited about working with U.S. Attorney Meehan and implementing *Project Sentry*," said Vallas. "Safety in our school communities is job one, and with our new mentoring initiative, we will give students the tools and support they need to live safely."

Project Sentry is part of *Project Safe Neighborhoods*, a Department of Justice initiative designed to identify and prosecute firearms offenders in federal court, where the defendants are likely to receive a substantial sentence upon conviction. From September 2001 through December 2003, the United States Attorney's Office, local district attorney's offices, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other federal, state, and local agencies, have worked together to indict 703 defendants who have received an average prison sentence of nine years.

Funding for the campaign is provided by a Justice Department Community Outreach Partnership Grant. The U.S. Attorney's Office in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania has partnered with CrimeAlert Berks County, which receives the grant money designated to fund the *Project Safe Neighborhoods* outreach effort.